

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone (416) 325-2600
Facsimile (416) 327-9063

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone (416) 325-2600
Télécopieur (416) 327-9063



June 23, 2010

Dear colleagues,

As the 2009-10 school year draws to a close, I want to take a few minutes to reflect on what we have accomplished and to look ahead at the upcoming year.

Thanks to your hard work and dedication, we have made great strides in publicly funded education over the last eight months. Some of our accomplishments are clearly measurable: EQAO assessment results show that 67 per cent of students in Grades 3 and 6 are achieving at or above the provincial standard, a 13 per cent increase since 2002-03; and 79 per cent of students are graduating with a high school diploma. This means that more of our students are getting a strong foundation for learning and are better prepared for future success in life.

With your co-operation, we have also put the pieces in place for increased success in upcoming years. To give just a few examples, together we have:

- Expanded our student success programs, including Specialist High Skills Majors, which help engage high school students in their learning.
- Made student achievement the top priority for school boards and promoted good governance practices and sound financial management through the Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act.
- Clarified expectations for student work and assessment through *Growing Success*, our updated assessment, evaluation and reporting policy, which will be implemented beginning this September.
- Made schools safer, more positive places to learn through the Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act which, among other measures, requires all school staff to report serious student incidents – including bullying – to the principal and requires principals to contact students' parents.
- Continued to promote equity, inclusiveness and respect in our schools thanks to our Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, launched in April 2009. The strategy is helping educators across the province better identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to student achievement.

.../2

We are also starting to move forward on full-day kindergarten, which is the single largest change to the education system in the past decade. We have come a long way since announcing the program model in October 2009: we identified the nearly 600 schools that will offer the program in 2010-11 and the approximately 800 schools that will offer it the following year; we entrenched full-day kindergarten in the Education Act and drafted the curriculum document that will guide teachers and early childhood educators in the classroom.

The program that will be rolled out to nearly 600 schools this fall is the result of collaboration between schools, school boards, associations, municipalities, Best Start Networks and community organizations. That collaboration will continue to be essential during the first year of implementation and as we roll out full-day kindergarten in all of our schools.

Thank you for all your hard work throughout the 2009-10 school year. I ask for your ongoing commitment and dedication in all of the work we do for Ontario's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Costante', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Costante
Deputy Minister